

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (original): A method for decontaminating contamination containing biological spores, comprising the steps of:  
  
contacting the contamination with a spore germination composition comprising dipicolinic acid and calcium ions effective to cause germination of the spores; and,  
  
applying a decontaminating solution to kill the germinated spores.
2. (currently amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the step of contacting the contamination with the spore germination composition effective to cause germination of the spores is performed simultaneously with the step of applying a decontaminating solution to kill the germinated spores.
3. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the step of contacting the contamination with the spore germination composition effective to cause germination of the spores occurs prior to the step of applying a decontaminating solution to kill the germinated spores.
4. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 50 mM to about 90 mM dipicolinic acid.
5. (original): The method of claim 4, wherein the calcium ions comprise calcium chloride.

6. (original): The method of claim 5, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 50 mM to about 90 mM calcium chloride.
7. (original): The method of claim 6, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 60 mM to about 80 mM calcium chloride.
8. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 0.8% w/w to about 5% w/w dipicolinic acid of the total spore germination composition.
9. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the spore germination composition further comprises water.
10. (original): The method of claim 9, wherein the spore germination composition comprises from about 50% w/w to about 98% w/w water.
11. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the spore germination composition further comprises a surfactant.
12. (original): The method of claim 11, wherein the surfactant is selected from the group consisting of anionic surfactant and nonionic surfactant.

13. (original): The method of claim 11, wherein the surfactant comprises at least one carbon chain of from about six carbon members or more.
14. (original): The method of claim 12, wherein the surfactant comprises from about 5% w/w to about 15% w/w of the total spore germination composition.
15. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the decontaminating solution comprises enzymes.
16. (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the decontaminating solution comprises a peroxygen compound.
17. (withdrawn): A decontaminating composition for decontaminating biological spores, comprising:  
  
a first component of a spore germination composition comprising dipicolinic acid and calcium ions; and,  
  
a second component of a decontaminating solution effective to kill the germinated spores.
18. (withdrawn): The decontaminating composition of claim 17, wherein the calcium ions are supplied by calcium chloride.

19. (withdrawn): A decontaminated spore product made by the process comprising the steps of:  
contacting contaminant spores with a spore germination composition comprising dipicolinic acid and calcium ions effective to cause germination of the spores; and,  
applying a decontaminating solution to kill the germinated spores.
20. (previously cancelled)
21. (withdrawn): The decontaminated spore product of claim 19, wherein the contaminant spores comprise an endospore selected from the group consisting of *Bacillus* and *Clostridium* species.